



# BLUE AND GOLD

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## Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

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## Keystone Degrees, State Stars and More Awarded at 90th FFA Mid-Winter Convention

HARRISBURG, Pa. — With over 5,000 attendees at Mid-Winter Convention, the FFA Association awarded 409 members the Pennsylvania Keystone State Degree on Jan. 7 during the Pennsylvania Farm Show.

New this year, both junior and senior FFA members were eligible.

In order to earn their degree, applicants need to be an FFA member for 24 months, complete 300 hours of work or invest over \$1,000 in their project, log 25 hours of community service and participate in a number of FFA events.

The Pennsylvania FFA Alumni and Supporters were also able to provide 365 new jackets to first-year FFA members through the generous donations of companies and individuals.

With the help of Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding, Secretary of Education Pedro Rivera and the first Executive Director of the Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence Dr. Robert Clark, Pennsylvania FFA chartered four new chapters: Milton Area, Northeast, Shanksville-Stonycreek and Lewisburg FFA.

The State Stars in the areas of agriscience, agribusiness, agricultural production and agricultural placement were also selected and recognized.

These four individuals will compete at the Big Eastern Exposition in September.



365 new FFA members received their jackets at Mid-Winter Convention.

The Stars are as follows:

Wyatt Emig was awarded the State Star in agribusiness. Emig is the son of Wade and Jill Emig and is a member of the Bermudian Springs FFA chapter. His Supervised Agricultural Experience fell under plant systems.

Emig owns and operates three greenhouses measuring about 25,000-square feet in space, and sells the fruits and vegetables he grows at a roadside stand.

Michael Riggs won the State Star for agri-

cultural placement. The son of Wade and Dawn Riggs, he is a member of the Battlefield FFA chapter.

His SAE is in the category of food products and processing systems.

Riggs is a coordinator at a local McDonald's and through the years has learned skills such as food safety, management and customer service.

Mikara Anderson won State Star for agricultural production. Anderson is the daughter of Gerald and Holly Anderson and is a member of

the Southern Huntingdon FFA chapter.

Her SAE is breeding and raising a diversified livestock operation.

Anderson owns, manages and breeds all of the animals on her farm, including market lambs, swine and goats. She then sells her animals and uses the money she earns to continue her animal operation.

Finally, Arilyn Tegtmeier-Oatman is the State Star in agriscience. The daughter of Scott and Mathilda Oatman, she is a member of the Manor FFA chapter.

Her SAE is ongoing research investigating the impacts of raw feeds and store-bought foods on small animals.

Arilyn measures weight gain and tests different blood glucose discrepancies in rats.

She proved her hypothesis by observing that the rats that were fed a raw feed mix were healthier than the rats that were fed a store or soy feed mixture.

Secretary Redding stated in his Mid-Winter Convention speech that you cannot talk about agriculture at Farm Show without mentioning the blue and gold of Pennsylvania FFA members.

After 90 years of Mid-Winter Conventions, the Pennsylvania FFA Association looks forward to the future of agriculture across the commonwealth.

## FFA Helps Shape the Way for Future Career Paths

### FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

My name is Abigail Yoder and I am serving as the 2018-2019 Pennsylvania FFA State Treasurer. I live in Hetlerville, Pennsylvania, with my parents and two sisters.

As a freshman at Central Columbia High School, I joined the FFA chapter for several reasons.



ABIGAIL YODER

First, FFA was and is popular within my family. My grandfather, father, cousins and sister all were active members during their high school years.

Secondly, I was a member of the Columbia County and the Sheer Perfection Livestock 4-H clubs and showed market goats for seven years at the Montour-De-long Community Fair and the Bloomsburg Fair. This sparked an early interest in animals and agriculture.

Finally, I'm interested in a career in agricultural and environmental sciences.

This interest in science is reflected in my FFA career with some of my favorite Career/Leadership Development Events including Livestock Judging, Forestry, Wildlife, Aquatics, Prepared and Extemporaneous Public Speaking, Parliamentary Procedure and Creed Speaking.

One of my favorite activities that I participated in with my chapter and the Columbia County Conservation District was our chapter-sponsored Outdoor Adventure Camp, held at Kocher Park in Lightstreet, Pennsylvania.

Kocher Park is Columbia County's environmental park, operated by the Columbia County Conservation District.

The camp itself was designed and implemented for third through sixth-grade students to learn about environmental sciences.

A local Girl Scout troop created a tree identification key so that every tree in

the park is labeled for educational purposes.

Fishing Creek also flows through the park, providing the opportunity for students to learn about fresh water resources, macro/micro-invertebrates, erosion, and sedimentation control and aquatic life.

I assisted with this camp as an FFA member, guiding participants as they built bluebird nesting boxes.

I thought it was awesome to see the interests and involvement from the students, as I enjoy educating youth about environmental sciences.

I benefitted from the camp too as it helped me prepare for the Pennsylvania State Envirothon.

Another important part of my agricultural and FFA career was my SAE. In tenth grade, I pursued a Supervised Agricultural Experience program at Renco Ace Hardware in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania.

With a growing population that is predicted to reach over nine billion people by the year 2050, agricultural and environmental education are essential.

Through these opportunities, I have developed a passion in learning about wildlife, forestry, aquatics, soils and current environmental issues.

The experiences that I have shared in this article relate to my potential career. After my year as a State FFA Officer, I have two potential paths.

I would like to attend either Bloomsburg University to major in environmental geosciences or study agricultural education at Penn State.

*Editor's note: Abigail Yoder is serving as the 2018-2019 Pennsylvania FFA State Treasurer.*

## The Buzz of a Supervised Agricultural Experience



REAGAN CARTER  
H.G. Parkinson FFA Reporter

The time came in 2017 when I, just like every FFA member, had to pick an SAE project.

My dad suggested buying honeybee hives for our family's 125-acre farm to pollinate the crops and vegetation. This would help both us and the honeybee population in my area.

On June 6, 2018, my dad and I bought two honeybee hives from a local beekeeper and started our new adventure with no prior knowledge on beekeeping.

The first day with the bees consisted of screaming, tears, being stung and a call to my local beekeeping expert asking for some help.

I began informing myself on the intricacies involved with beekeeping. I was intrigued to learn that every bee has a job and each bee is crucial in ensuring the hive is working properly.



Reagan Carter poses with some of the bees from her Supervised Agricultural Experience project.

It's an eye-opening experience to see how effortlessly the bees work both in and out of the hive.

A single bee will go to 50 to 100 flowers before returning to the hive. While hundreds of bees are working outside of the hive, hundreds more are working even harder inside.

The bees are taking the pollen and turning it into the honey that they depend on and we love to eat.

My job in caring for the hive looks minimal, but makes a difference in the production of honey.

I give my bees sugar water monthly and pollen patties weekly. The pollen patties give the bees a direct source of pollen to speed up honey production.

Since my hives are less than a year old, I did not get any honey this year.

However, I will start harvesting honey next year and hope to bottle enough to sell to friends, family and community members.

In the future, I would like to purchase more hives for various locations on my family's farm.

Recently I received the Learning By Doing Grant through the PA FFA Foundation to help me improve my honeybee operation.

Before having honeybees as my SAE project, I never took the time to consider how important bees are when it comes to our food supply.

One out of every three bites of food we take depends on bees and they supply \$30 billion worth of crops every year.

Without bees we would not have apples, cashews, avocados, coffee and so much more.

I believe that we are accustomed to those foods always being available, but people do not realize that those foods can be taken away if bees go extinct.

I have now made it my mission to use my voice through FFA to inform others on the importance of honeybees and the impact they make on our daily lives.

Through this research and many hot days with my beehives, I have learned that we need honeybees more than they need us.